

REMARKS

This Amendment and Response is being submitted in reply to the Official Action dated April 12, 2000. A three (3) month extension of time is enclosed herewith. Therefore, the time period for response extends up to and includes October 12, 2000.

In the above amendments, independent claim 20 and dependent claim 21 were cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute such claims in a continuing application. Claims 22, 23 and 26 were amended so as to not depend on cancelled claims 20 and 21. Applicant notes that the amendments to claims 22 and 26 were made to overcome the Examiner's objection and were not made to overcome an art based rejection. Accordingly, such amendments should not be construed in a limiting manner.

At paragraph 2 of the subject action, claims 20, 21 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. First, claims 20 and 21 have been cancelled without prejudice above. Second, claim 23 now depends on claim 22 (e.g., a claim which was not rejected in the Office Action). In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the Examiner's rejection is now moot, and Applicant requests the Examiner's reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

At paragraph 3 of the action, the Examiner objected to claims 22 and 24 - 26 as depending on a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner noted that if this objection was corrected, then the claims were otherwise allowable. Applicant has rewritten claims 22 and 26 to be in independent form. Further, claim 23 now depends on claim 22 (and claim 24 depends on claim 23). Accordingly, claims 22 and 24 - 26 should now be in proper form for allowance.

At paragraph 4, the Examiner indicated that claims 1 - 19 and 27 - 161 are in condition for allowance. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his careful review of this application and indication of allowable subject matter.

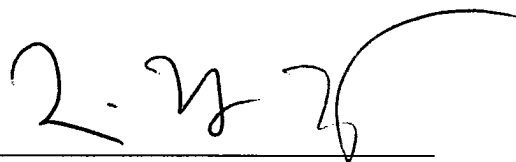
Finally at paragraph 5, the Examiner indicated that Applicant's arguments were not persuasive with respect to claims 20, 21 and 23. Applicant again respectfully traverses this argument, and notes that to expedite prosecution claims 20 and 21 have been cancelled, while claim 23 has been made dependent on claim 22.

It is believed that all claims remaining in the application (namely claims 1-19 and 22-161) are now in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this response he is respectfully requested to telephone Applicant's attorney Charles E. Golla at 612-336-4786.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



Brian H. Batzli
Reg. No. 32,960
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
3100 Norwest Center
90 South Ninth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402-4131
Telephone: 612/332-5300